RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 1st December, 1988/10th Agrahayana, 1910 (Saka) ....

The House met at eleven of the clock., *Mr. Chairman* in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*281. [*The questioner (Shri Suresh Pachouri) was absent. For answer* vide *cols.* 32-33 infra]

*282. [*The questioner (Shri Chitra Basu), was absent. For answer* vide *cols.* 33 infra]

*283. [*The questioner (Shriamti Renuka Chowdhury) was absent. For answer* vide *cols.* 33-34 infra]

Forest area

*284. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what was the percentage area of forests in the seventies in various Indian States; and

(b) what is the present percentage area of forests, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Percentage of forest area to Geographical area

State/UTs	% of forest area to geographical area (1970-71)	% of forest area to geographical area (1985-86)
Andhra Pradesh	23·5	23.24
Arunachal Pradesh	61.7	61·6
Assam	36.4 (Including Meghalaya and Mizoram	39.2
Bihar	16.8	16.8
Goa, Daman & Diu	27.5	32.9
Gujarat	8.9	9.8
Haryana	3.3	3.8
Himachal Pradesh	38·5	38.3
Jammu & Kashmir	9.5	9.4
Karnataka	18.3	20.1
Kerala	29·1	28.8
Madhya Pradesh	38·0	35.1
Maharashtra	21·5	20.8
Manipur	26·9	68.0
Meghalaya	N.A.*	38.0
Mizoram	N.A.*	75.5

*Figures for Meghalaya and Mizoram are not available as the State of Meghalaya and Union Territory of Mizoram were created in 1971.

States/UT	%of forest area to geographical area (1970-81)	%of forest area to geographical area (1985-86)
Nagaland	17.4	52 0
Orissa	43·3	38 .2
Punjab	4·2	5.6
Rajasthan	10.8	9 .1
Sikkim	N.A.	37.3
Tamil Nadu	17.3	17 2
Tripura	60.1	60.0
Uttar Pradesh	16.6	17.4
West Bengal	13.5	13.4
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	90 1	86 4
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	42 9	31 .2
ALL INDIA	22.7	22 .9

SHRI NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, according to the statement of the hon. Minister, the percentage area of forests in our country was 22.7 in 1970-71 and it was 22.9 in 1985-86. But according to international standards, it must be roundabout 33 per cent. For many years, Government has been advocating the advantages of afforestation and cautioning about the dangers of deforestation as well as tapping of non-conventional sources of energy. Unfortunately, the Government is sincere in words but not in action. Therefore, there is no increase in the percentage area of forests keeping the ecological imbalance as it is. The social forestry, wasteland development and the other recently announced schemes are not giving the expected results. Therefore, I would like to know whether there is any sincerity and seriousness on the part of the Government of India to increase the percentages area of forests, not in words but in reality.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: Precisely, the answer is that the Government of India is making all efforts to increase the forest area. But Sir, there are certain difficulties in our way. The biotic pressure which is increasing every day is a very great constraint in our way. There are also developmental programmes for which certain forest areas are diverted for non-forest uses. In a developing country like ours, we cannot stop all these developmental schemes and developmental projects. There are constraints but in spite of all these constraints, we are trying to take measures most sincerely to increase our forest area.

SHRI NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Sir, my second supplementary is, whether there is any proposal to provide special Central assistance for the development of the Eastern Ghats, as has been provided in the case of the Himalayan mountain range, the Western Ghats and the Nilgiri hills. I would also like to know whether there is any pro-

posal to set up a forest university in Andhra Pradesh, at Tirupati, to develop modern techniques and to provide research facilities and whether there is any proposal to set up two giant nurseries at Hyderabad and Tirupati for dryland farming.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: Sir, I do not have the information in regard to all these questions which have been asked. But we have schemes for the development of forest areas in the Western Ghats, the Eastern Ghats, the Himalayas and other sensitive areas which are ecologically very important.

SHRI NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: For Eastern Ghats there is no special Central assistance.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: There is no Central assistance given to any particular area. We have an overall programme for the development of Eastern Ghats, Western Ghats, Himalayas and so on. Whatever proposals come to us we consider them and give assistance to all those areas.

SHRI KAHNU CHARAN LENKA: Sir, I wanted to draw the attention of the hon. Minister towards Orissa. In 1970-71 the precentage of forests in Orissa was 43.3 and in 1985-86 it has been reduced to 38.2. I am sure, even this 38.2 per cent figure is not correct, it is much less than that. Now it is 30 per cent which is less than the minimum requirement also. The quantum of forests in Orissa is reducing day by day and I think this will now be below the national average and the forest areas which have been declared as forest land in Orissa there are no forests at all. I want to know what steps are taken by Government of Orissa to increase the forest area, whether any target has been fixed to bring the position to that of 1970-71. If there is any target, what is that?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: It is true that in Orissa the forest area has come down to 38.3 per cent. These are the figures which have been reported to us by the State Governments. There is a difference between the forest area and the forest cover. What I have talked about in this table is the forest area. 38.2 per cent is the forest area. It is a fact that in many forest areas the forests have been degraded and they have been denuded because of many biotic pressures, extraction of fuel, fodder, cattle population, etc. Whenever there is shortage of fuel or fodder the pressure comes on the forests. Therefore, there is no doubt that the phenomenon of denudation of forests is noticed in our forests but we are taking steps through the Wasteland Development Board to increase especially fuel wood and fodder resources for the people so that this pressure on the forest areas is reduced. I do not have the State-wise schemes or programmes and the steps taken by the States. If the hon. member is interested, I can pass on the information to him.

श्री कैलाशपति मिश्र : माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूं कि प्रतिवर्ष जंगल की जितनी मात्रा में बरबादी हो रही है और नए जंगल लगाने की चेष्टा होती है, दोनों के संतुलित आंकड़े क्या सरकार के पास रहते हैं? महोदय, मैं बिहार से आता हूं, वहां जंगल का बहुत बड़ा इलाका है, एशिया का बेस्ट फारेस्ट, करण्डा फारेस्ट बिहार में छोटा नागपुर में है, 20,000 एकड़ तक की कटाई बिल्कुल हो गई है, बुरी तरह से बरबादी हो रही है और सरकार के पास बरबादी के कोई निश्चित आंकड़े नहीं हैं तो मंत्री महोदय प्रतिवर्ष नए जंगल लगाने का क्षेत्र और जंगल की जो बर्बादी या रही है, उसके कोई आंकड़े रखते हैं और क्या सरकार उसका कोई निदान निकालने को तैयार है?

श्री जेड० आर० अंसारी : जनाबेवाला जैसाकि मैंने पहले कहा इसमें कोई शुबा

नहीं है कि बायोटिक प्रेशर की वजह से और फ्यूल वुड और फोडर की कमी की वजह से फॉरेस्ट का डिग्रेडेशन हुआ है। मैं इससे भी इंकार नहीं करता हूं कि वह कम अब भी बाज-बाज इलाकों में जारी है।

श्री कैलाश पति मिश्र : जंगल फ्यूल के कारण नहीं बर्बाद हो रहा है बल्कि जंगल की कटाई हो रही है, स्मगलिंग हो रही है.. **(व्यवधान)**..

श्री जैड० आर० अंसारी : जनाबेवाला ये दो फैक्टर्स हैं। इन दो फैक्टर्स के अलावा टिम्बर की डिमांड बढ़ती चली जा रही है कंस्ट्रक्सन एक्टिविटीज और दूसरे चीजों में। हम इस बात की पूरी कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि लकड़ी की जगह पर दूसरा मटैरियल सबस्टीट्यूट कर प्रचलित किया जाय ताकि जंगलों पर जो प्रेशर है वह कम हो। साथ ही स्टेट गवर्नमेंट को और फारेस्ट डिपार्टमेंट को स्ट्रेंगथन करने की कोशिश कर र हैं ताकि डिग्रेडेशन कम हो जाय।

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Barring five or six States, in all the States the area under forest has gone down. The picture is not good. In spite of the efforts being made by the Department, we are not able to achieve the desired purpose. There are only two States which have done very good work, i.e. Nagaland and Manipur. In Manipur, it was 26.9% in 1970-71 and it has gone up to 68%. Similarly for Nagaland, in 1970-71, it was 17.4% and now it has gone up to 52%.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put your question.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: I am doing that, Sir. But I must give the background. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how they were able to achieve this good picture in these two States and whether the experience of these two States will be passed on to the other States so that they can also do the same type of work. I would further like to know whether for that purpose any incentives were given to these two States and whether such type of incentives will also be given to the other States.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: Sir, by and large, decrease in the forest area in most of these States, wherever that has occurred, is because of the diversion of forest area for developmental plans which have been posed to us for clearance under the Forest Conservation Act. Till 1980-81, the rate of diversion of forest area was 1.5 lakh hectares per year. But since 1980, when the Forest Conservation Act was passed, the Govt. has brought down the diversion of forest area for developmental schemes and for other non-forestry usage to 15,000 hectares per year. We are making efforts but this is a fact that we cannot altogether stop the developmental schemes and plans. The hon. Members are always serious about the clearance of forest area for development...

MR. CHAIRMAN: But you are trying to reduce degradation.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: What are the reasons for these two States' achievement? That is most important so that the information is passed on to other States. The Minister has not replied to that.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: There are two reasons for that. In these North-Eastern States—Nagaland and Manipur — not many projects have come up for diversion of forest land and more areas have been declared as forest area and therefore the area in these States has increased.

SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY Sir, forest areas in every region are getting reduced day by day, thereby causing great ecological

imbalances resulting in devastating fires in Assam and reducing Cherrapunji, the highest rainfall area in the world, to a scanty rainfall area. I want to know whether the Minister is aware of the fact that illegal felling of trees is taking place in Orissa and Assam and what are the measures he wants to take to check that.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: Sir, as fas as illegal felling of trees is concerned, we have taken certain steps. We have given directions to the State Governments and Union territories to stop the contract system and, in most of the States and Union territories, Forest Development Corporations have been set up to take over the job, and working of the forests is not being done through contractors. Secondly, in those forest areas where the infrastructure is not available to stop illegal felling, we have schemes to strengthen the infrastructure, and from whatever State the demand comes for the strengthening of the infrastructure, we give them assistance.

श्री अजीत जोगी : मान्यवर, पर्यावरण विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार किसी भी क्षेत्र विशेष में कम से कम 33 प्रतिशत वन का होना आवश्यक है किन्तु जैसा मंत्री महोदय के उत्तर से स्पष्ट है हम इससे बहुत पीछे हैं और प्राय: सभी प्रदेशों में यह आंकड़ा इससे बहुत कम है। मेरा मूल प्रश्न एक नीति से संबंधित है कि जिन कारणों से वन का क्षेत्र कम हो रहा है उनमें सबसे बड़ा कारण यह है कि अब भी हम बड़ी बड़ी योजनाओं की और परियोजनाओं की स्वीकृति देते जा रहे हैं जैसे हाल ही में नर्मदा सागर की स्वीकृति दी गई है सरदार सरोवर की स्वीकृति दी गई है, मध्य प्रदेश में बोध घाट की स्वीकृति दी जाने वाली है। इनसे बहुत बड़ा वन क्षेत्र डूब में आता है और वन के क्षेत्र की जो संख्या है वह कम होती है **(व्यवधान)**

श्री सभापति : प्रश्न क्या है आपका ?

श्री अजीत जोगी : और इसके साथ ही मान्यवर, एक समस्या उससे जुड़ी हुई है कि बहुत बड़ी तादाद में आदिवासी और वनवासी उससे विस्थापित होते हैं। तो मैं मान्यवर, पूछना चाहूंगा कि क्या केन्द्रीय शासन यह नीतिगत निर्णय लेने वाला है वनों को बचाने के लिए कि भविष्य में बड़ी योजनाओं की स्वीकृति न दी जाकर छोटी-छोटी योजनाओं की स्वीकृति दी जाए जिससे वन का बहुत बड़ा क्षेत्र डूब में न आए, वन के क्षेत्र में कमी न हो, पर्यावरण का सन्तुलन बना रहे और आदिवासी जो विस्थापित होकर पीड़ित और दुखी होते हैं वह भी न हों।

श्री सभापति : क्या आप जवाब दे सकते हैं इसका ?

श्री जैड० आर० अंसारी : आपका हुक्म हो तो मैं जवाब दे दूंगा **(व्यवधान)**

श्री अजीत जोगी : बड़ी योजनाओं को मंजूर न करके छोटी योजनाएं **(व्यवधान)**

श्री सभापति : बड़ी योजनाएं फारेस्ट मिनिस्ट्री सैंक्शन नहीं करती। You have been an officer yourself...

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: They continue sanctioning these big projects, Sir.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: Sir, it is true that whenever any of these schemes is projected to us in the Ministry of Environment and Forests, we go through all the details and after ascertaining that all the safeguards have been made as sanction those schemes. This is a developing country and we require water resources to be developed, we require power resources to be developed and we cannot afford, in this developing country, to stop all those projects. We are, as a matter of fact, in a difficult situation. So, after ascertaining that all necessary steps have been taken for the rehabilitation of the persons who have been displaced.

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: There is not one instance where those persons have been rehabilitated properly.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: For the rehabilitation, for the afforestation of some other area outside whatever area is submerged....

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is talking about rehabilitation of those who have been displaced. It is not your responsibility; it is another Ministry.

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: It is their responsibility.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: Sir, the projects come to us for clearance from the environment angle. The hon. Member wants to know why clearance is being given to these big projects. We give clearance to these big projects after evaluating them.

*285. [*The questioner (Shri Ghulam Rasool Matto was absent. For answer* vide *cols* 34-35 infra]

Mining in Doon Valley

*286. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:† SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that mining has again been allowed in the Doon Valley in violation of all rules and norms;

(b) if so, what are the details of the mines which have been reopened;

(c) whether the Supreme Court by its order dated the 30th August, 1988 has stayed the mining in all but three mines in the Mussoorie-Dehradun belt; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for reopening the mines?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Veena Verma.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(b) and (c) The Hon'ble Supreme Court has allowed continuation of mining operations by the following three lessees till the expiry of the lease period:

(i) Lambidhar Limestone Mine of U.P. State Mineral Development Corporation bearing lease No. 94 which is valid upto 10-3-1996.

(ii) Ladwakot Mine of Shri R. K. Oberai bearing Lease No. 72 which is valid upto 10-4-1994.

(iii) Limestone Mine of Punjab Lime and Limestone Company bearing Lease No. 96 which is valid upto 12-12-1989.

Besides these, the Hon'ble Court has directed Vijayashree Minerals which has lease valid upto 20-3-1990 to file an undertaking that it would immediately restore vegetation over 100 acres of private land near to the 15 acres of leased area and that leased area would also be reafforested by the lessee immediately after the lease period is over, and on filing the undertaking the lessee, as a special case, shall be permitted to operate until the expiry of the lease. This mine is also now working in addition to the three mines mentioned above.

(d) Apart from the four mines mentioned above which are working under the Orders of the Honourable Supreme Court, no other Limestone mine has been allowed to be reopened.

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Sir, it is surprising that Vijayshree Minerals has been allowed by the district administration to mine on land acquired by the U.P. Government, which has